2001 Award Recipient

Mati Weiderpass '81

Mati Weiderpass, you have used your ingenuity and business acumen to build one of the strongest watch retail conglomerates in the United States. During your 15-year career in retailing, you have helped change the face of watch retailing.

Following the completion of your undergraduate degree in management engineering, you were commissioned in the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant. Your Army career took you to Germany, where you finished a four-year tour as captain. You then enrolled at one of Europe's most outstanding business graduate schools, IMEDE, in Lausanne, Switzerland, where you worked on a marketing plan for Swiss watchmaker Swatch. So impressed by your analysis and strategic approach, Swatch hired you following your graduation and you spent the next eight years in positions of increasing responsibility at the company.

In 1996, unable to persuade Swatch to open its own retail sites, you moved to Manhattan to launch Watch World, one of the largest fashion and sports watch retailers in the United States. In five short years, your innovative watch stores, which number over 100 throughout the nation, have become one of the top three retailers for most of the brands carried. In 1999, your leadership and business acumen was rewarded when you were selected by Ernst & Young as one of twelve Entrepreneurs of the Year, the premier award for American entrepreneurs in New York City. In 2000, you sold your retail empire to Sunglass Hut International and joined that enterprise as vice president of watch manufacturing.

Mati Weiderpass, for your visionary leadership and entrepreneurial spirit, we are very pleased to present to you the Ichabod Washburn Young Alumni Award for Professional Achievement.